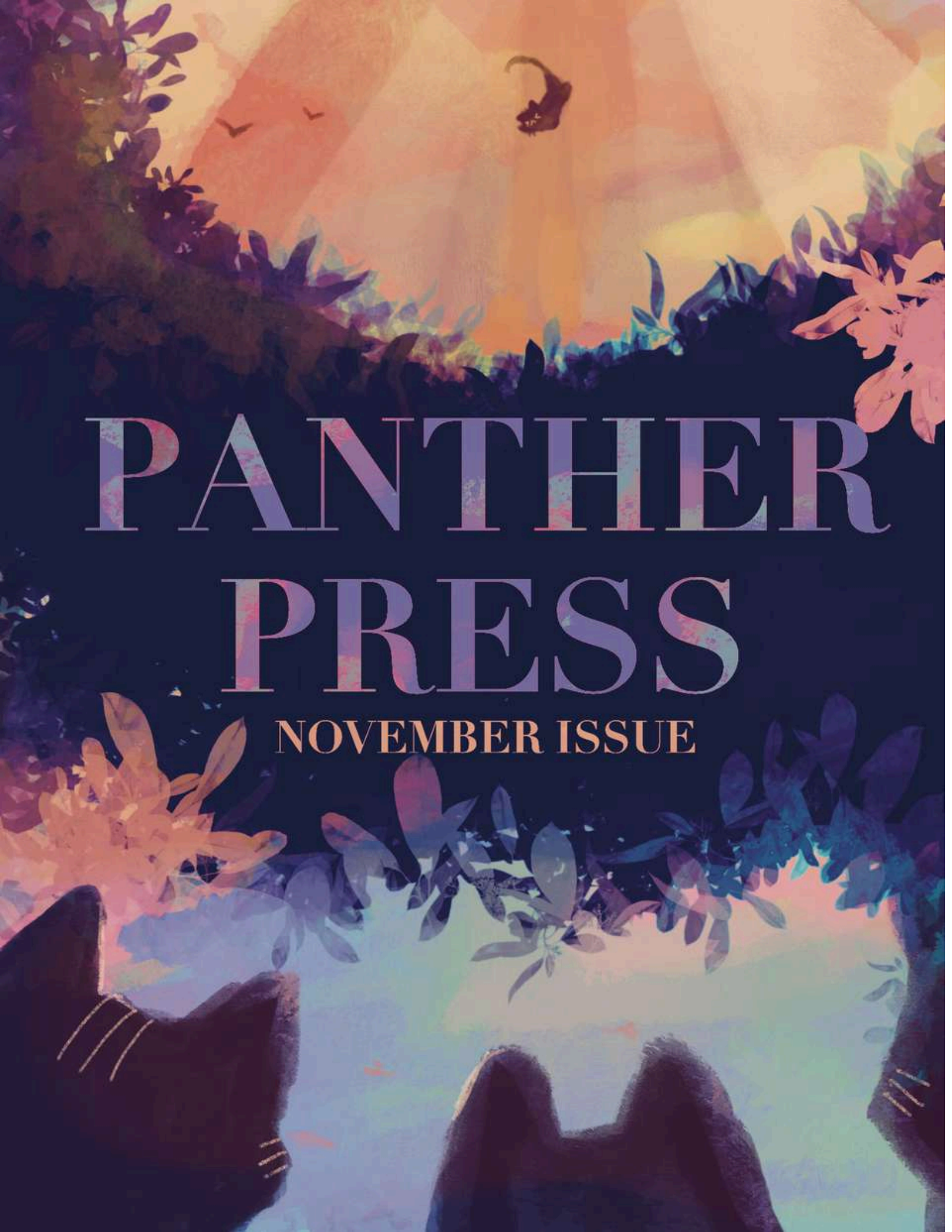
PANTHER
PRESS
NOVEMBER ISSUE

Remembrance Day

Observed on November 11, Remembrance Day honours Canadians who served and died in conflicts like World Wars I and II. Canada chose this date to mark the armistice that ended WWI in 1918. The day involves ceremonies, including a moment of silence at 11 a.m., reflecting on the bravery and sacrifices for our freedoms. This observance underscores the nation's gratitude toward those who fought to protect peace.

Can Love Be Guaranteed?

You often hear about love around you, whether that means your friend recently got a partner, you made new lovable friends, or even that your parents express their love for you through words, physical affection or cutting fruit. However, as much as we hear about love and being loved, it begs the question: can love be guaranteed? This article will discuss the different types of relationships you can have and whether love would be required.

Photo Credit: Frank Huang

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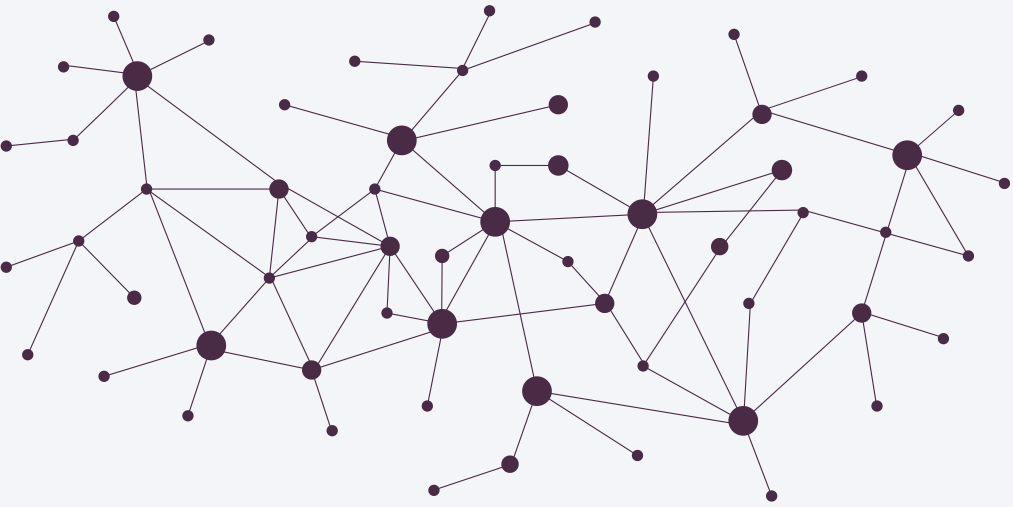
Photo Credit: Frank Huang

Cover image Credit: Lily Luo



AI

By: William Song

Artificial intelligence is becoming a significant part of education today, altering how students learn and handle their assignments. AI has two sides: although it can help students do their work and understand certain subjects, it also has some downsides, such as over-reliance on AI. Thus, the impact of AI on students can be either positive or negative, depending on how they use it.

AI has made it easier for students to complete their work, as many apps and programs use AI to help check grammar, solve math problems, and even more. For instance, AI writing tools can assist students in organizing their thoughts and fixing errors in their essays. This saves time and allows them to focus on more challenging tasks. However, relying too much on these tools can prevent students from developing critical thinking and independent problem-solving skills.

AI also helps students comprehend difficult concepts by offering an individualized educational process. Some educational platforms use AI to identify student areas and then adapt questions to meet the student's needs. Language apps like Duolingo adjust the difficulty of lessons based on the user's progress, allowing them to learn at a comfortable pace. This customized approach can make studying more effective and less stressful. On the flip side, using AI for explanations all the time can limit a student from thinking deeply about the material on their own.

Additionally, students can use AI to help with entire projects, which has advantages and challenges. AI tools can assist in gathering information and organizing it neatly, making it easier for students to complete their assignments. However, if they rely on AI to do most of the work, they miss out on the learning process, which could also create an over-reliance on AI. This makes it harder for teachers to assess what students truly know.

AI's influence on education is both beneficial and problematic. It offers great tools that make learning more accessible and personalized but can also lead to over-dependence. The key is for students and teachers to use AI wisely, viewing it as a support tool rather than a shortcut. With the right balance, AI can enhance learning and help students reach their full potential.

DECA Regionals

By Alina Chen

DECA is split into five main clusters: principles, marketing, entrepreneurship, finance, and business management. There are 2 different types of events: writtens and teams. This year at Ontario DECA, every participant was expected to write an exam.

The precursor to official regionals started on November 5, 2024. VP DECA did their exams in the library, including individuals, writtens, and teams competitors. We interviewed Zayaan Bhanwadia, Integrated Marketing Service Campaign (IMCS) competitor and the writtens trainer at VP DECA.

Photo Credit: Sarah Wang

You may be wondering, what exactly do writtens competitors do? Zayaan says they “create a written report or come up with ideas for consulting businesses on various matters.” He highlights that “in writtens you have preparation time and are working until the competition day to prepare a presentation instead of being given a case study to do on the day of the competition.”

Zayaan also gave a few tips on how to ace a DECA exam: “I would recommend doing previous year's exams and either making notes or going over a quizlet with key terms and other important information for your cluster exam.”

Photo Credit: Sarah Wang

When asked how he thinks he did, Zayaan said, “My partners and I did great. Hopefully, we qualified. The exam was fairly easy, and we all studied a lot, so hopefully, it paid off.” Panther Press congratulates the team on making it to Provincials and wishes the best of luck to all team competitors!

Aside from writtens competitors, we also had teams writing the exams. Teams competitor Nathan Ye said that the exam was “decently well organized”; he also notes that “I had a French oral next period so I had to do the exam fast, and I got almost zero on French Oral because I took too long to do the exam, I had like 20 min. It’s ok I still did bad on french oral anyway”.

Photo Credit: Sarah Wang

Overall, the exam process for VP DECA regionals went quite smoothly, and all competitors did phenomenal. Congratulations to everyone who competed, and good luck at in-person Regionals!

DECA Regionals

THE VP DECA SWEEP ◦ ALINA CHEN ◦ PART 2

Welcome to part 2 of DECA Regionals with the VP DECA chapter! On November 15, 2024, over 70 VP students traveled to Cedarbrae CI to compete in the area 3 regionals competition for the case study portion. We interviewed several students, including Edward Zhao, a grade 10 Sports Entertainment Marketing competitor.

Photo Credit: Sarah Wang

Edward says a case study is “essentially a role play where students are given a scenario and a problem to solve using Performance Indicators (PIs).” He felt “pretty decent after my role play. I was kinda confident in my answers”; however, he also noted that “ for my last pi, I didn’t know what it meant, so I started yapping.” It only goes to show that sometimes, yapping does prevail.

Unlike most competitors, Edward says that he “did not practice whatsoever or attend any meetings” for the exam portion of the competition. Regarding the roleplay, he says that he “also did not do any practice or go to any meetings. I did ONE practice case the night before at midnight, and that was it. I winged it and somehow got top 10.” Panther Press advises everyone not to be like Edward; please study and be like Zayaan (refer to THE VP DECA SWEEP: Part 1) instead. Nonetheless, a huge congratulations to Edward for his top 10 overall and roleplay placement!

Still curious for some more behind the scenes? Don't worry, we interviewed VP DECA's very own co-president Arya Afsheen to find out how VP DECA runs!

Arya says she's "incredibly grateful to be able to work with a hard-working, creative and committed executive team, teacher supervisors, Ms. Leung and Mr. Smart and my co-president, Lucas, without whom none would be possible. Our executive team runs training sessions almost every day. Moreover, we create resources to help members learn business concepts, do one-on-one mock case studies and organize chapter-wide events, such as our highly successful mock regionals exam."

She says she is proud of VP DECA's performance at regionals.....Our members pulled through, and VP DECA walked away with a whopping 126 awards, including distinction in every event we competed in. In addition, we had a 69% provincial qualification rate!"

As a final note, we received some tips from the co-president: "Practice makes perfect! We have lots of resources for practice, including mock exams and one-on-one case studies with our executive team. And we plan to ramp these resources up in preparation for provincials! Attend meetings as often as possible, complete the homework your trainers assign on time, and take advantage of our chapter's resources."

Overall, VP DECA performed incredibly well, securing over 126 awards: 17 top 3 o: all, 38 top 10 cases, 32 top 10 exams, and 39 top 10 overall. Congratulations to all competitors, regardless of whether or not they won an award. Co-president Lucas Fang said it best: "VP SWEEP!!!"

We are incredibly proud of each and every member of the VP DECA Chapter this year. Best of luck to everyone who made it to Provincials; we hope each and every one of you makes it to ICDC and brings home Glass!

Sports RECAP

By: Jasmine Chen

November is often a transitional period between sporting seasons. This means there tend to be fewer interschool games and competitions as students start preparing for winter sports. Despite this, Victoria Park's Athletic Council continues to hold events where students can stay active indoors, avoiding the chilly fall weather.

One of VPAC's annual events is hosting intramurals for various students who can sign up in teams and compete against one another for a chance to win prizes. In November, VPAC held dodgeball intramurals across several lunches. Teams played in a round-robin format to determine their placement, and later, they came together for an elimination-style bracket where a champion was crowned.

Behind the scenes, there is much planning involved in these events. Nehan, the Co-President of VPAC, stated, "It takes a lot of teamwork and commitment to plan these intramurals successfully." Some tasks that he mentioned were prevalent to the planning of intramurals included logistics, promotion, finding student volunteers, and improvising under unprecedented circumstances.

Since the end of COVID-19, the council has been returning to a regular schedule with events such as the Terry Fox Run and other athletic activities. When asked about the importance of participating in school activities, Nehan remarked, “Staying active and having fun directly [improves] mental health.” He also mentioned that it improves student connections, saying that “it’s a chance for them to have fun and socialize while engaging in an easy and accessible source of exercise.”

If playing sports casually interests you, intramurals are a great way to relieve the stress of school while staying active and interacting with other students. Now that winter is approaching, fewer outdoor options exist to stay active. Luckily, VPAC is hosting another round of intramurals in December, this time for basketball. Additionally, many winter sports are starting up again, such as swimminboy’s basketball and girl’s volleyball. Be on the lookout for more athletics news, and don’t forget to come out and show your school spirit for these teams.

Go Panthers!

Remembrance Day

By: Setayesh Rustam Khan

Introduction:
Observed on November 11, Remembrance Day honours Canadians who served and died in conflicts like World Wars I and II. Canada chose this date to mark the armistice that ended WWI in 1918. The day involves ceremonies, including a moment of silence at 11 a.m., reflecting on the bravery and sacrifices for our freedoms. This observance underscores the attitude toward those who fought to protect the peace.

Historical Background:
Remembrance Day was established in Commonwealth nations to honour soldiers who served in World War I, with November 11 marking the 1918 armistice. Over time, it expanded to commemorate those who served in later conflicts. Canada officially recognized Remembrance Day in 1931, and the day has since become a significant annual reflection on the sacrifices made for freedom and peace.

Symbols and Traditions:
The red poppy is a prominent symbol of Remembrance Day in Canada, inspired by the WWI poem "In Flanders Fields." People wear poppies, attend ceremonies, and observe silence at 11 a.m. to honour fallen soldiers. These traditions foster gratitude and a sense of collective memory, helping Canadians reflect on the courage and sacrifice of veterans.

Importance Today:
Remembrance Day continues, reminding Canadians of war and the value of peace. It serves as an educational moment, helping new generations appreciate the significance of past conflicts and veterans' contributions. By remembering these sacrifices, Canadians reaffirm their commitment to peace and respect for those who defend our national values.

Conclusion:

Honouring those who served in Canada is essential to understanding the importance of peace and the costs of freedom. Canadians can participate in Remembrance Day by wearing poppies, attending ceremonies, and engaging in moments of silence. By learning about military history or sharing veterans' stories, people help keep these memories alive. Remembrance Day emphasizes peace and gratitude, ensuring that veterans' legacies inspire future generations toward a more unified, peaceful Canada.

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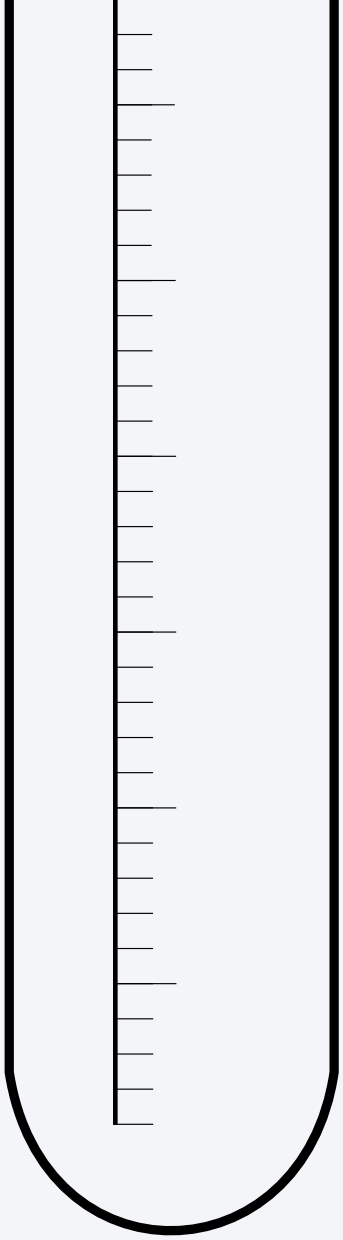
Science Olympics

By Samuel Guo



STEM at Victoria Park

From cubing to web development, Victoria Park Collegiate Institute offers a variety of clubs, one of the finest being the Science Olympics. Science Olympics is starting once again, with its introductory meeting on November 13.

To gain insight into how Victoria Park students outside Science Olympics perceive the club, Panther Press asked, “What do you think Science Olympics is?” Some students understood it as a club “primarily focused on science events and competitions.” In contrast, others interpreted it as “an athletic event to raise money for science” or “hurdling, but with equations.”

Being a STEM-focused club, Science Olympics faces challenges in attracting members not interested in STEM, which was addressed in the meeting. To solve this, the executive team promises events tailored to everyone, not just experts in STEM. Events like “scavenger hunts” are included to ensure Science Olympics is fun for those not interested in science; a statement made by the executive team is “whether or not science is for you, there’s always stuff you can do.”

Science Olympics highlights its focus on STEM with events in biology, engineering, chemistry, maths, robotics, and astronomy. There are no entry barriers; prior experience isn’t required, as training will be provided. Participants can develop problem-solving and teamwork skills, apply scientific knowledge, and have fun! Meetings will be in room 211 on Wednesdays during lunch. Drop-in workshops begin on November 20th, and training will occur in the second semester.

To conclude this article, we held an interview with Science Olympics executive Shirley Chen.

Photo Credit: Feng Cai

Photo Credit: Samuel Guo

Samuel Guo: What has Victoria Park Science Olympics done to make itself more appealing to all people?
Shirley Chen: This year we're really emphasising making Science Olympics more accessible and well-known. Workshops are run in room 211 on Wednesdays at lunch, and we hope this generates more interest for those wishing to join in the spring.

SG: What does Science Olympics offer that can elevate the high school experience?
SC: Science Olympics is a great way to know people from different grades and an amazing way to apply yourself in the STEM field. Essentially, the more you practise, the more you win. VP sweep!

SG: What is your favourite part of Victoria Park's Science Olympics?
SC: Personally, I think winning is good; winning with your team is even better, and there really isn't anything better than winning with friends while doing STEM challenges. We hope to see everyone there!

SLC x Medlife Halloweek

By: Eshan Kiritharan

Highlights of Halloweek at Victoria Park

This year, October 28 to November 1 marked Victoria Park's 2024 SLC x MEDLIFE Halloweek, a Halloween-themed spirit week celebrated by Victoria Park students. In October's iconic celebration, Halloweek held numerous events to encourage school spirit.

Organized by Medlife and the Student Leadership Council (SLC), Halloweek created school spirit through simple and engaging events for students to participate in. It also gave out prizes to lucky winners and those who demonstrated their participation.

Each day of the week had multiple events for students to celebrate. Some, such as Dress Like Your Teacher and On Wednesdays We Wear Pink, encouraged students to wear outfits corresponding to the day's theme, while other events had students play games like Halloween Bingo and Teacher Scrabble.

Thursday, October 31, was the most iconic day of the spirit week. Students received treats from rooms across the school building and wore their Halloween costumes, with students who wore costumes having received extra treats. Friday held Victoria

Park's annual Halloween Dance after school, where students partied, wore costumes and danced.

Many students believed this event did an excellent job of showcasing VP's school spirit and creating an engaging event for students to have fun. Emily Dai, the president of Victoria Park's Student Leadership Council, felt Halloweek highlighted Victoria Park students' enthusiasm for school events.

"It was gratifying to see all the participation in Spirit Week! Seeing people come in their pyjamas, wear pink and come to school dressed up in their best costumes showed our school spirit!"

Not everybody was satisfied with Spirit Week. Some students noted little participation in events such as Pink Shirt Day and limited knowledge of the events occurring on each day of the week.

Emily Dai noted the difficulty in organizing multiple events as a council.

"We wanted to provide "students with a variety of events. But it wasn't easy to organize and plan something for everyone. We focused on the Halloween Dance and Senior Sunrise."

Emily stressed the importance of student feedback in making next year's Halloween better for students.

"While Halloween was fun, we are taking feedback from students to improve it for next year."

THE STARVATION OF THE 21ST CENTURY

The man-made famine in Gaza can't be ignored. When people bring empty pots and plates asking for food is when you know that they are starving.

By: Alya Saad

May God give patience and hope to those oppressed.

The Man-made Famine

“When the first child dies from malnutrition and dehydration, it becomes irrefutable that famine has taken hold.”(Human Rights Watch, April 9. 2024) So what does it mean when more than 37 children have died, and almost 50,000 children have been found severely malnourished since Oct 2023? 96% of Palestinians in Gaza are acutely food insecure.(Al Jazeera, 20 Oct. 2024) People in northern Gaza have been forced to survive on an average of 245 calories a day, less than a can of beans. (Human Rights Watch, April 9. 2024) Edible wild green leaves and clean water are now like gold in the eyes of starved civilians and are hunted down daily. (Reuters, June 24, 2024) Palestinians in Gaza have no choice but to shelter in the tonnes of piled rubble where buildings and houses used to stand. On top of this, total bloodlines and cities are being demolished by intense Israeli bombardment. Forty-three thousand five hundred eight people, of which 16,765 were children, were killed since September 7, 2023. More than 102,684 were injured, and about 10,000 were missing under the rubble. (Al Jazeera, 9 Oct. 2023)

Why?

“We are imposing a complete siege on Gaza. There will be no electricity, food, water, or fuel. Everything will be closed,” Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant announced on October 9, 2023. “We are fighting human animals, and we are acting accordingly.”(Reuters, June 24, 2024) Though Israel was pressured enough not to impose their plan of this siege fully, it is a siege nonetheless and is still ongoing on the people of Gaza. Before the war, about 500 humanitarian aid and food trucks entered Gaza each day. Now, Israel has reduced that to less than half. Israeli groups attacked many trucks that would try to get through the border into Gaza. (Reuters, June 24, 2024). In addition, the remaining Gazan hospitals have little resources to treat those malnourished. “Israel is making deliberate choices to starve civilians. Imagine what it is like, not only to be trying to survive on 245 calories day in and day out but also having to watch your children or elderly relatives do the same. All whilst displaced, with little to no access to clean water or a toilet, knowing most medical support has gone, and under the constant threat of drones and bombs.” Amitabh Behar, Oxfam International Executive Director, said. (Human Rights Watch, April 9r. 2024)

US Elections (cont.)

By: Jeffrey Zhao

Republican Donald Trump won the US presidential election, defeating Democrat Kamala Harris 312-226 in the electoral college. He is set to win the popular vote for the first time. Here's a more in-depth look at his plans

Immigration:

Trump has promised to deport the more than ten million undocumented immigrants living in the US. Although he faced legal trouble trying to deport them in his first term, this time around, the courts are filled with judges he appointed, so they're likely to be friendlier about his requests. If so, Trump could get this through only using the executive branch, bypassing Congress.

Foreign policy:

Regarding Israel, Trump is expected to be more sympathetic to the nation than Biden was. He has repeatedly criticized Biden for, in his view, not letting Israel go far enough in their campaign in Gaza. He has also promised to let Israel "finish the job." On the domestic side of the equation, he has vowed to deport pro-Palestinian protestors, whom he sees as sympathetic to Hamas.

In terms of the war in Ukraine, Trump has repeatedly emphasized the need for the war to end, with a key ally saying that Ukraine should prioritize peace over regaining lost territory. However, he has not shown how peace could be achieved. Moreover,

He has repeatedly criticized US aid for Ukraine. A paper written by two of his former national security chiefs suggests that the US aid Ukraine only when they've entered peace talks with Russia.

Democracy:

Trump has repeatedly used inflammatory remarks against his political opponents, calling them "vermin" and "the enemy within." Seeing himself as a victim of political persecution, he has vowed to go after them with the power of the Department of Justice. In addition, Trump has promised to remake the executive branch of the US, seeing the millions of US civil servants as members of a "deep state" that is working against him. He has pledged to remove protection for these government employees, fire them, and replace them with loyalists.

Healthcare:

Although Trump denies that he'll attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act, Barack Obama's signature healthcare plan, which has given health insurance to millions of people, his actions in his first term suggest otherwise. Without a vote from Senator John McCain, his administration would have repealed the ACA and replaced it with the American Healthcare Act. This bill would've kept large parts of the ACA but ended income-based subsidies and limited Medicaid expansion, among other provisions. It's unclear whether Trump would use the American Healthcare Act as a model for an ACA replacement, with him saying that he had "concepts of a plan" for how he would replace the law.

Clubs Highlight

Larts de VAC

By: Monica Chen

VAC est un club pour les artistes et pour partager les intérêts d'art. Il est dirigé par les artistes, pour les artistes. J'ai demandé à Sarah et An, les directrices d'art pour VAC, de parler à propos de leur travail sur le club.

Pour trouver les idées pour les ateliers, elles ont pris les idées d'art qu'elles ont faites dans le passé et de membres de VAC. Elles ont parlé des événements du passé qu'elles veulent ramener, comme Arts Bash, et à propos de la création d'un environnement sûr pour tous les élèves. Quand j'ai demandé leur partie préférée, tous les deux ont dit la fête d'art, où vous pouvez voir la passion de tous les élèves pour ce qu'ils vendent.

Le mois dernier, VAC a accueilli un atelier pour fabriquer des modèles en argile. Malgré mes compétences pauvres dans l'art (soulignées par Winnie dans sa vidéo à propos d'événement) et le manque d'argile blanche, j'ai trouvé un lieu où les erreurs ne sont pas graves et l'expérience est célébrée surtout. En plus, il y avait un événement complémentaire pour l'Halloween avec plusieurs jeux et des bonbons.

VAC donne un espace confortable pour tous les élèves de VP de trouver leur créativité et de faire quelque chose de nouveau pendant le déjeuner. Ce club donne aux membres une opportunité de voir comment ils peuvent contribuer aux communautés d'école et de trouver les personnes avec les mêmes intérêts d'art.

Après l’école, le Discord de VAC donne aux artistes un espace pour montrer leur art et de recevoir des remarques s’ils veulent. Il y a aussi souvent les concours d’art sur l’Instagram de VAC où les élèves peuvent soumettre l’art sur un thème pour avoir la chance de gagner un prix.

Le club nous donne une communauté pour les artistes, les supporteurs d’art et les élèves qui veulent des choses amusantes à faire dans un espace pendant les déjeuners. Dans les prochains mois, regardez les publicités pour la fête d’art, où les élèves vont vendre leur art. Je vous verrai dans leur prochain atelier!

#slice-of-life #suffering

Building BILLY

I bought a BILLY bookshelf from IKEA, and it all went downhill from there.

By: Alisa Chen

After learning about IKEA's brilliant business model, I knew I had to join in on consumerism; I bought myself a BILLY bookshelf.

BILLY bookshelves sound like a good idea. In fact, for most people, they are. They come with clear instructions, straightforward assembly, and the promise of a clutter-free home. As for my experience? Well, I lost a screw as soon as I ripped the cardboard packaging open. Do you know how sometimes, when you tear something open too abruptly, your hands jerk, and the contents of that something fly all over the place? Yeah, that's what happened.

I thought, screw the screws—let's nail the nails. Whipping out my trusty rusty hammer, I confidently struck the nail head, except it actually hit my nail bed. Ouch.

A single tear trickled down my face and landed right on the nail head, which was unfortunate since it meant my tear ducts had better aim than mine. On the plus side, the droplet wobbled when I shifted the nail, reminding me of Jell-O. I really like Jell-O. This fleeting moment of solace gave me enough strength to keep going, so I soldiered on.

Thankfully, I breezed through the rest of the instructions and put together the bookshelf in under 8 hours. I might've peed a little bit when one of the shelf planks randomly cracked (plank's fault), but that's beyond the point. Eight hours is only 7 hours more than BILLY's estimated build time. Wahoo!

Stepping back to admire the fruits of my labour, I bumped into a chair and fell forward into my precious BILLY. It was a well-deserved embrace, but it didn't go well. BILLY wobbled dangerously, and I felt my heart race. I clung on for dear life, hoping to stabilize the bookshelf (I am currently unemployed and cannot afford to fix the floors). I was shaking so hard I almost pronounced "DJUNGELSKOG" correctly in between sobs, even though I was trying to call for help.

Next thing you know, I'm sprawled on the floor, but at least BILLY is upright 😌

#suffering #realism?

IS CENSORSHIP EVER JUSTIFIED?

Exploring whether censorship is ever justified in modern society.

By: Subu Bhattarai

In 2024, access to information is easier than ever. However, the content that we end up seeing is influenced by censorship. Censorship is the suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, etc., considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security. The implementation of censorship is present across organizations such as schools, workplaces and governments and is often justified as a measure to protect individuals. However, is the control over the content we consume ever justified? We, as individuals, should be able to control what information we see.

Canada is a democracy where freedom of expression and speech is protected in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The content that we wish to see is up to personal preference. If certain information is blocked from our access, our viewpoints and values can become one-sided. We have the right to choose our values and, in turn, should be able to analyze all information available to us.

Another major issue with centrally enforced censorship is the classification of inappropriate material itself. The criteria for such material differs from person to person, making it difficult to make choices for an entire population. Suppose a governing body were to implement censorship. Would it censor material considered NSFW (Not safe for work, such as pornography or material/information with differing values from it? For example, content that contains values differing from those of the governing body may be censored by diverse perspectives. The misuse of censorship's power is why most people are against it. No governing party should be able to control the media or push a value on everyone.

Finally, human nature is another reason enforcing censorship is unsuccessful and unjustifiable. When something is left up to choice without any restriction, people often make more rational decisions. A study by Indiana University found that young adults are less likely to abuse alcohol if they grow up in or are surrounded by an alcohol-tolerant environment than those in one restrictive of it. This same principle can be applied to censorship: if a person is told that they aren't allowed to access a specific book or article, they may go out of their way to get a hold of it. Often, "forbidden Fruit is the sweetest," meaning people get a thrill out of accessing restricted information as they believe they are "beating the system."

To conclude, centralized censorship appears to be advantageous in theory as it promotes the protection of citizens. However, in practice, it raises more issues than solutions as it narrows perspectives and diversity of viewpoints. Individuals should be able to make their own decisions about what media they choose to consume and form their own opinions on issues.

Citations: "Forbidden Fruit." Alcohol Research and Health History, Indiana University , alcohol.iu.edu/articles/forbidden-fruit/index.html. Accessed 8 Nov. 2024.

Can Love Be Guaranteed?

By: Shriya Mukherjeer

You often hear about love around you, whether that means your friend recently got a partner, you made new lovable friends, or even that your parents express their love for you through words, physical affection or cutting fruit. However, as much as we hear about love and being loved, it begs the question: can love be guaranteed? This article will discuss the different types of relationships you can have and whether love would be required.

Love, as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, is “an intense feeling of deep affection” or “a great interest and pleasure in something.” Yet some believe love is a feeling of security and safety within a relationship. Others think that love is not necessarily a feeling but a state of being that you need to practice expressing through kindness, empathy, and assurance. Even smaller actions, such as offering your friend your jacket or half of your granola bar, express our love and care.

Like most feelings and states of beings, love cannot be forced and may not last. A common exatypicals in friend groups, where you may be close to 4 out of 5 members, and then there is one odd man out. You can try to love them as much as the others, but you sacrifice your authenticity and values for a futile effort. Another instance is within arranged marriages. Many, if not the majority, get married and have children due to social pressure. Numerous people still ask their parents to set them up in hopes of a Prince Charming ending, and frequently, the realization about their future sets in only when it is too late. There is this odd expectation that you will eventually fall in love, but love cannot be built like trust, confidence and tolerance.

We have established that love is not a choice, though it often feels like an expectation. Now, comes a bigger question: are parents obligated to love

their children? When a mother gives birth, she is expected to fall in love with the infant she just birthed immediately. However, postpartum depression affects 1 in 7 mothers, according to the National Library of Medicine, and a common symptom is difficulty bonding with and loving the child. This goes untreated in approximately 50% of cases because of the guilt the mother feels, which supports the idea of love being involuntary. Another instance of a parent not loving their child may be when an adult takes in a child from a late relative rather than allowing the child to go through the foster care system. It is not necessarily harmful for a parental figure not to love their child, so long as they care for and make them feel loved.

But do children also have to love their parents? In Asia, it is more important to prioritize your parents' opinions over your own and to respect and care for them above all else. In Hinduism, care and respect for one's own are considered a dharma, or a “right" way of living.” In C" Confucianism, filial piety refers to obedience, respect, and care for one’s money members, particularly parents and the elderly. In contrast, Western culture tends to be more individualistic. While it is normalized to tolerate mistreatment in Asian cultures and to adhere to all parental wishes, the West allows for more personal freedom. Overall, the expectations of love differ between cultures, and although many believe love for parents should be unconditional, this may be harmful rhetoric.

To conclude, love cannot be an obligation or guarantee when love is not a task or an active choice. Love is a state of being or feeling that can be seen as an expectation in many personal relationships, but that is not an actual requirement.

Review (Pt. 2)

DONDA - KANYE WEST

7.6/10

By: Jonathan Wan

The other half of Donda definitely has songs that are better oriented towards the message of Donda. This is best demonstrated by the song after Remote Control, Moon, a beautiful ballad involving the best of Kid Cudi and Kanye, which encapsulates the magic seen in many of their other collaborations. It's heart-wrenching and truly captures the feeling of being emotionally disconnected from the one you love. Heaven and Hell is also a highlight from the album, truly rising in power as Kanye's sample ties into his rapping extremely well. The ending is also reminiscent of Feel the Love from the Cudi-Kanye collaborative album Kids See Ghosts.

The songs Keep My Spirit Alive and Lord I Need You from the latter half of this album both use these contemplative instrumentals and have catchy choruses, focusing on Kanye's devotion to God. The features are pretty good on Keep My Spirit Alive, and I love how the song references the vocal effects of Beautiful Dark Fantasy. This is, of course, friendly, but other than the choruses, Kanye's rapping ability has to be questioned at this point on the album. It's especially evident in the opening of Lord I Need You that Kanye's rapping ability has declined since Yeezus. However, both these songs touch on many of Kanye's deepest troubles, with his divorce and the grief he suffers from losing her mother. There is a rawness to many of the songs on the album that is truly amazing.

New Again and Pure Souls are nice songs that are more upbeat and energetic than the two aforementioned songs. New Again has a stellar intro and a nice Graduation-esque beat, although the outro is lengthy. Pure Souls has an amazing feature from Roddy Ricch, beats with the 808s and organ instrumentals, and the mood switch-up with its contemplative, religious vocals on the outro is ethereal. It's truly one of the highlights of the album. Donda and Tell the Vision are short songs, almost like unfinished concepts. For this, and the shameful recycling of the original Tell the Vision from Pop Smoke's Faith album, both should've been kept off. Jesus Lord is a somewhat confusing but wholesome 8-minute experience, with Kanye rapping under a pretty mid-beat. Still, it does some solid, purposeful rapping from him with a respectful anti-violence message.

At the album's climax is the penultimate track, Come to Life. This is the best song on the album. It focuses on his divorce from Kim Kardashian, and you can truly hear Kanye at his most hurt. Backed by sparse yet building organ synths, he reflects on his deepest fears and admits that he, who a decade ago said he was a god, is backed into a corner. And as he wishes that changes would appear, the organs disappear, replaced by an accelerating piano riff backed by sparse synthesizers. This mixture of piano, synths, and melancholy matures into a beautiful apex where Kanye finally declares that even under all the adversity, his mother's death, and his divorce, he will still be free. As the piano wraps to a close, the closing track, No Child Left Behind, begins a tremendous sombre track with heavy organs. Of course, there are four extra alternative tracks, but after 2 hours of listening, I doubt anyone continued and listened to them.

In the end, Donda is a melting pot of different messages. While on the surface, Donda seems like a tribute to Kanye's mother, it is just a look into Kanye's inner psyche, a look that we have never truly seen before, not even on introspective albums like Ye. While some songs sample Donda West's voice, most don't reference her. While occasionally unfocused, the album focuses on Kanye's divorce and his relationship with God. While often euphemizing his relationship with God with corny and lazy lyrics, the songs still give a very clear and interesting picture of his relationship with Kim. It does no better job of reflecting on his relationship with God than Jesus is King. Still, it does give a nice, in-depth and emotional picture of his divorce that reflects the lyricism of 808s and Heartbreak, although with a much blunter tone.

Compared to the rest of his discography, if the quality of the songs were to be averaged out, this album would probably be on the same level as the Life of Pablo. They also share a bloated characteristic and song quality. However, the highlights honestly deserve to be classics. The songs I think are highlights, Moon, Come to Life, Believe What I Say, Pure Souls, Praise God and Hurricane, can honestly rival classic Kanye songs. Meanwhile, songs like Tell the Vision, God Breathed, and Remote Control probably deserve to be thrown into a bonfire and incinerated from the public consciousness. In the end, Donda has a lot of flaws and even more bloat. But if you go beyond just scratching the surface, Donda becomes a very rewarding album with its gospel-rap fusion instrumentation and messaging.

Cats
V

S
Dogs

Cats vs. Dogs?
(An Obvious Answer)

By: Krishnapriya Nagasubramanian

Cats vs. dogs? This is something that has been debated for centuries. Despite this, there has never been a clear conclusion to this debate. Cat lovers insist that cats are the best, and dog lovers will do the same. However, today, I will prove that this debate is pointless because the true answer is cats. I'll prove it with just three solid reasons.

To begin with, cats are pretty self-sufficient. They groom themselves, are cool with spending time by themselves, and can go to the bathroom independently with some training. Moreover, they are content staying at home and don't require the same repetitive, intense care as a dog. You can set them up with cardboard or some toys, and they'll have the time of their life. This helps those who don't have enough time to spend on a pet extensively but still want to take care of a pet and show it love. This is also useful for those who may have extended school or work hours.

However, that is not to say that cats are just introverted. All cats are different, and some cats can even be extroverted. Their range of personalities allows them to be loved by all types of people. They are also very attentive and know their boundaries. It makes it easy for a person to be calm around them and understand what the cat feels towards them. If a cat is uncomfortable with them, it's easy for the owner to notice. But it's also the same for cats. If the person feels unwell, the cat will probably notice it and try to make its owner feel better. This allows for different types of bonding and fulfilling interactions, quiet or loud.

But there is one final reason: they are delectably downright adorable! Their cuteness is unmatched. They can be serious, goofy, or even head empty with no thoughts. Just search for cute cats on YouTube, and the influx of serotonin may make you faint. Who wouldn't love a cute animal with cute

paws and cute purrs!? That’s another great feature of cats. They can purr, which can be soothing for the cat and the person. It means they are comfortable with you, and purrs have been said to have calming effects on humans. If I were to experience that, I don’t think I would survive. It would be too cute.

Clearly, based on these three reasons, cats are the superior animal. Although many dog lovers may disagree, cats are the way to go for anyone interested in getting a pet. Due to previous statements, they're self-sufficient, quiet yet attentive, and just so cute! Now, this debate has an obvious winner.

Rethinking Leadership: *Looking Beyond Appearances*

By: Nolan Wu

Our culture often associates leadership with individuals of commanding presence – outgoing, eloquent, confident, and charismatic. Consequently, we tend to underestimate the potential of people who do not display such traits, dismissing them for leadership opportunities. In reality, individuals who do not fit the stereotype can be equally or even more effective leaders. A broader view of leadership is essential for nurturing impactful leaders who reflect the diversity of our communities.

The bias toward extraversion and charisma can lead to the selection of people who appear “leader-like” but cannot lead. Emphasizing image can overshadow qualities such as humility, integrity, empathy, thoughtfulness, and strategic skills, which are crucial for creating cohesive, high-performing teams. In fact, certain stereotypical leader-like traits can have a dark side. A study by Hogan and Kaiser (2005) found that highly charismatic and assertive individuals often lack humility, which may lead to overconfidence and disregard for team input. Leaders selected for their charisma or assertiveness are more prone to risky decision-making and less likely to foster inclusive, collaborative environments. A case in point is Richard Fuld, the self-centred, charismatic former CEO of Lehman Brothers. Driven by his inflated ego, Fuld ignored cautions from his team and insisted on pushing risky strategies, ultimately contributing to the firm's collapse during the 2008 financial crisis.

Good leaders come in many forms, often defying stereotypes. Angela Merkel, former German Chancellor, is neither overly charming nor exceptionally

eloquent, yet her steady, pragmatic, and analytical approach helped stabilize the European Union during the 2008 financial downturn and the 2015 migrant crisis. Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, is known for being grounded, empathetic, and open to new ideas. His style fosters an inclusive and collaborative culture, which drives innovation and productivity and is helping re-establish Microsoft as a global technology leader. In the nonprofit sector, Malala Yousafzai brings an advocacy-focused leadership, using her personal experience to inspire people and promote education opportunities for girls around the world. Despite their different styles, these leaders share common qualities: they prioritize the greater cause over their personal ambition, and they inspire, unite, and empower others to grow and move forward with them.

Rethinking leadership beyond appearances is essential in high schools. By recognizing students' diverse talents, personalities, and backgrounds, we can create an inclusive environment that nurtures all potential youth leaders, empowering them to lead in their unique, impactful ways.

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FREE FALL

Z Z

WHEN OUR WALLS SHAKE
WE HOLD ONTO ANGER LIKE A LIFELINE,
AND CLING TO IT THE WAY WE CLUNG TO OUR MOTHERS WHEN WE WERE YOUNG.
JUST THE OTHER DAY, I IMAGINED OUR FINGERS WOULD SLIP,
I WAS THINKING WE WOULD ALL DIE TOGETHER
TO RELIEVE EACH OF THE OTHER'S PAIN.
I WAS THINKING THAT WE BROUGHT IT UPON OURSELVES
AFTER THE LAST OF OUR EFFORTS WERE SPENT
GLORIFYING OURSELVES IN VAIN.
EVEN WITH OUR HANDS GRASPING EACH OTHER
AND BODIES CLOSE TOGETHER
WE STILL STAND APART ON ISLANDS OF BLAME.

flowers

by Spruha Karanjkar

Birth, Death, Win, Loss -
All are reasons to gift a flower.
Make up, Break up, be Happy, or Sad -
Pretty things cheer us up.

but what when they wilt?
ugly, withered, rotten, and frayed -
ugly things put us down

So pretty, utterly delicate.
Yet the fragility does not discriminate.

To smile, or to frown?

Dimmed Light

by Ayaa Al-Sultany

In the shadowed corners of a weary soul,
Where echoes of battles constantly roll,
A heart weighed down by burdens deep,
Carries the scars that refuse to sleep.

Beneath the surface of a stoic face,
Lies a torrent of emotions, hard to trace,
A river of sorrow, a well of pain,
Flowing through veins like a haunting
refrain.

In the silence of night, where memories dwell,
Whispers of hate, a relentless swell,
Regrets like ghosts, haunting the mind,
Chains of the past, cruel and unkind.

Amidst the rubble of dreams undone,
Lies the embers of battles won,
A flicker of hope, a dimming light,
Guiding the way through the darkest night.

War and peace, a paradox embraced,
In the veteran's soul, where conflicts are traced,
A quest for self-worth amid the strife,
To forge a new path, to reclaim life.

Beyond the Fence

By: Aiya Saad

Part One

"Abboussi, wake up!" Qasem's small and hopeful voice rings through the morning air. He shakes me until I show a sign of life. I groan and turn away from him, shooting another empty attempt at sleep. "Abbass, you told me that we should start early today!" Qasem pokes my cheek. I try to wave him away, wanting just a few more moments of sleep.

"Abbass, I'm hungry." My brother persists, extending his hand to poke me yet again.

I sit up, annoyed, and rub my eyes, dodging his finger. "What's the time?"

Qasem shrugs. I look around to find everything dark, with a few beams of light escaping the gray walls through cracks and glassless windows.

"Come on" I mutter. I still have not come around to calling this dump my house, but really it is all we have now; an old abandoned shop, half demolished with glass from what was the window scattered everywhere and nonfunctioning light bulbs hanging from the dull ceiling, threatening to fall and add to the mess on the floor at any

moment.

Yawning, I get up from our makeshift bed, a bunch of old blankets and clothes bundled together.

****

It takes the whole day to find a decent amount of wild, mellow leaves and a lighter to cook with. At every passing minute, my stomach rumbles louder, and my head grows heavier.

I pile our bits of wood and burnable materials to start a fire as Qasem kneels down beside me, placing a plastic gallon on the ground, collected rainwater splashing inside. “Hey, Abbass,” Qasem hesitates, a solemn expression settling on his face. Do you remember Ibrahim?”

“Yes,” I mutter. Ibrahim had been my friend from school—when it was still standing. Ever since the war started, we lost touch.

“He and some boys were planning to cross the border to escape to Egypt.”

I freeze. Are they mad? Many have tried to cross the border to no avail. People got shot or taken away, never to be heard of again. Nowadays, no one dares.

“I don’t know if they crossed, only that they vanished.”

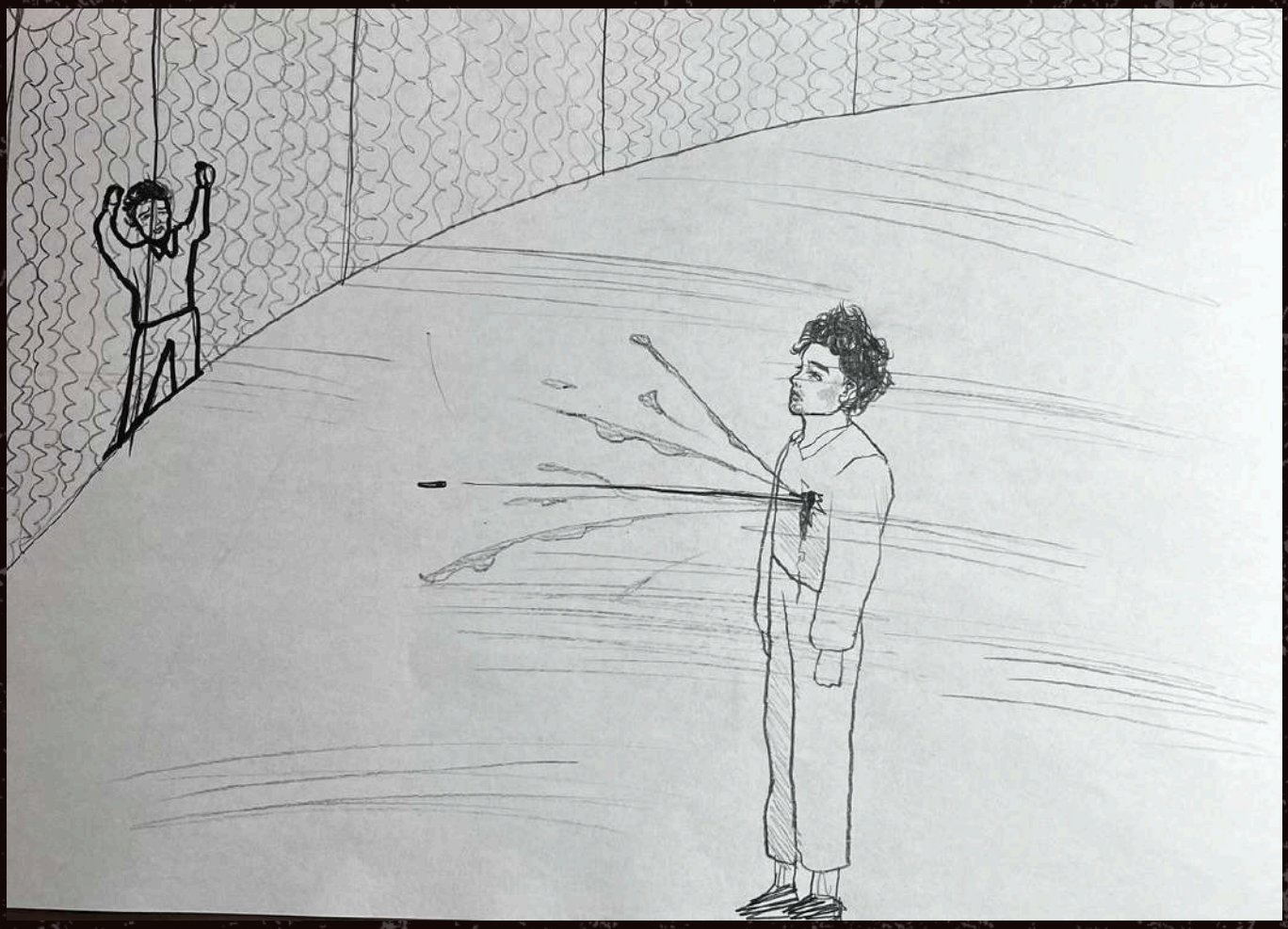
“May God be with them,” I utter, my mind racing with possibilities. The chance of them making it to the opposite side of the fence is nearly impossible. Nearly. What if they made it? I shake my head. There is no way over the barrier, where a barbed wire rests on top that will grab a bloody hold of whoever dares an attempt. Rumours say the fence extends a meter underground. Even if it didn’t, the guards would have eliminated them by the time one digs enough to crawl under.

Even knowing this, my mind races. It tries to escape the impossibility and searches for a way out of the inescapable loop. Yet, the possibilities of a new life await us beyond the border…

We eat dinner, a meal barely enough to quiet our rumbling stomachs. While the thoughts envelop me, I hardly notice Qasem crawling under the sheets and sleeping.

Unable to rest, I brainstorm a plan. I need to take Qasem to a safe place free of hunger. I grab a flashlight, kiss my brother’s cheek, and walk into the darkness of the night to find the materials to liberate us.

Part Two



“Promise me,” I say after explaining my plan to Qasem.

“Promise what?”

“To run. When I say run, don't hesitate. Don’t look behind you; I'll be right there, nor call my name; save your breath. And don’t stop running under any circumstances. Understood?” I stop walking and turn to Qasem, looking him in the eye and waiting for an answer. He nods, allowing my nerves to settle a bit and grin, pulling him in for a hug.

“We’ll be fine,” I whisper.

We walk in silence until we get there. Standing and glancing around, I notice a Mercedes car parked about three meters away from the fence. Perfect. I hand Qasem metal-cutting scissors and pull out a lighter and fireworks. Being almost midnight, the flashlights of soldiers guarding the fence act as our only source of light.

“That car,” I point to the white Marcadas.

“Be careful.” Qasem’s hazel eyes fill with worry.

I sprint towards the Marcedes, lighting the firework and tossing it underneath the car. I dive behind a wall, and seconds later, the firework explodes. I watch in horror as the green sparks distribute in the air and do not cause the car to go up in flames. Had the firework rolled from underneath the vehicle?

Still, a distraction is a distraction, though this one would serve us with less time. The soldiers turn their attention to the sparks of green floating down and flash their lights in search of a culprit. A small figure sprints to the fence to begin cutting. My heart races as I creep slowly towards my brother.

“I’m almost done,” he mouths, focusing on his work. I bite my lip as the soldiers separate again and resume their patrol of the area.

“There is no time! Leave it; we need to go.” My voice fills with fear. I grab the snips but freeze at the sound of an approaching soldier. Now, I must make a choice. If we abandon the plan now, they might see us returning. If we continue, they will have a better chance to shoot us.

I drop the scissors and grab the semi-circle Qasem cut, prying the fence open. As soon as there is enough space for Qasem to fit, I shove him through the hole. “Run!” I hiss.

“Hey! Stop!” A gruff voice calls from behind; a thousand feet sprint towards us. My heart pounds faster than all the running soldiers combined.

Qasem pushes himself through and stumbles to the ground beyond the fence.

Gunshots erupt from all directions.

“RUN!” I yell at my brother, my voice trying to beat the loud sound of the guns. A sudden pain in my leg blinds my senses.

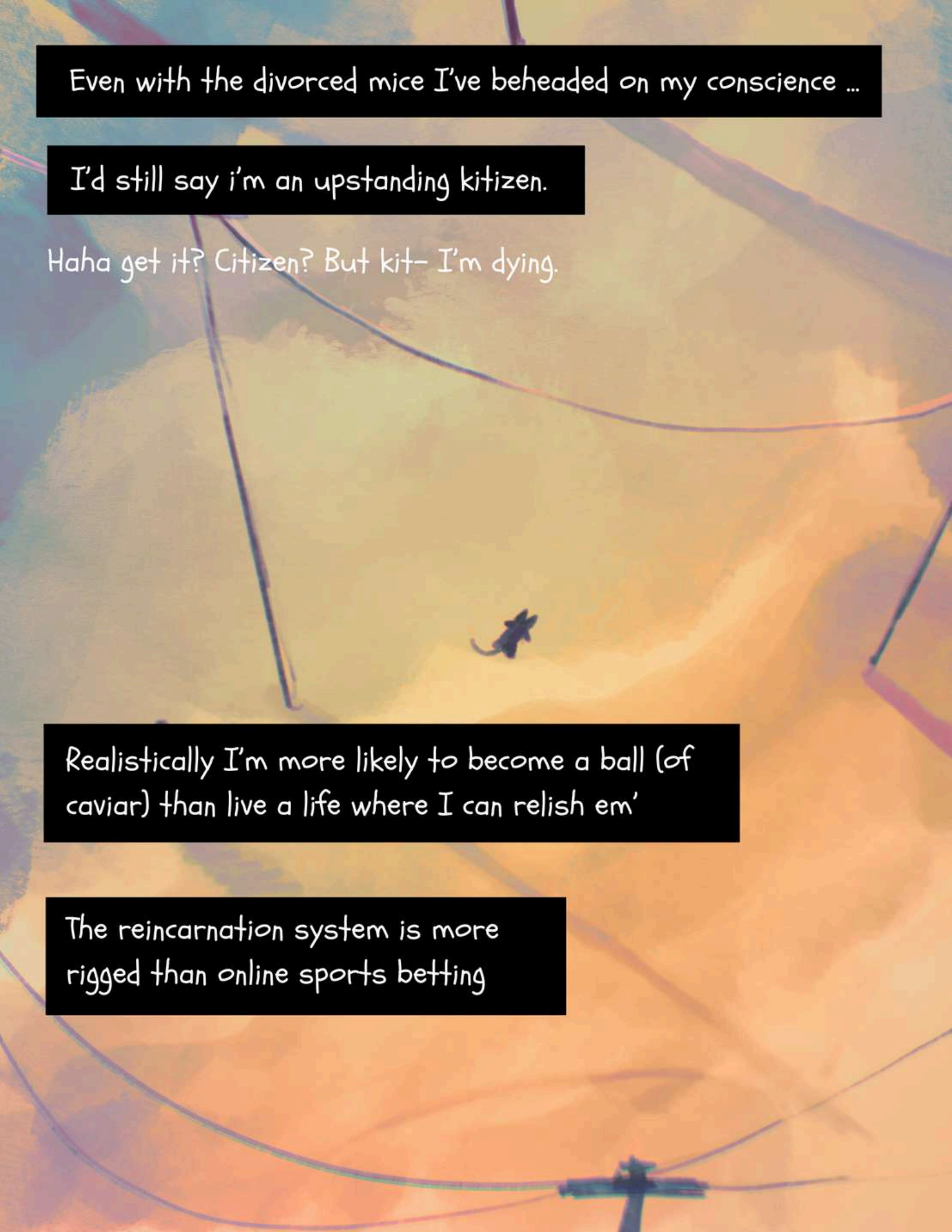
I stumble and fall. Qasem, on the other side, runs. His legs work faster than the wind carrying the bullets. He races towards the horizon.

More bullets hit me. Yet, this is the most beautiful moment of my life. Dying on the dusty ground, but seeing my brother finally free.

I smile.

Cat Comic: My Nth Life

By: Lily Luo (ʕ˵ •ᴗ• ˵ʔ)

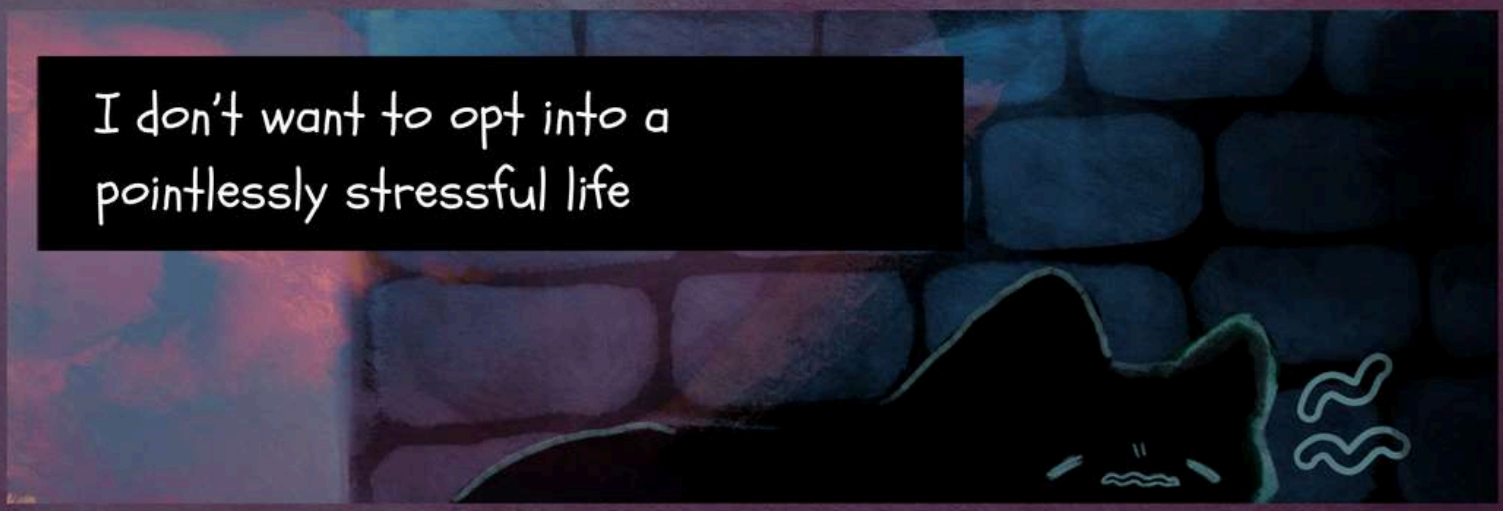

Even with the divorced mice I've beheaded on my conscience ...
I'd still say i'm an upstanding kitizen.
Haha get it? Citizen? But kit- I'm dying.
Realistically I'm more likely to become a ball (of caviar) than live a life where I can relish em'
The reincarnation system is more rigged than online sports betting

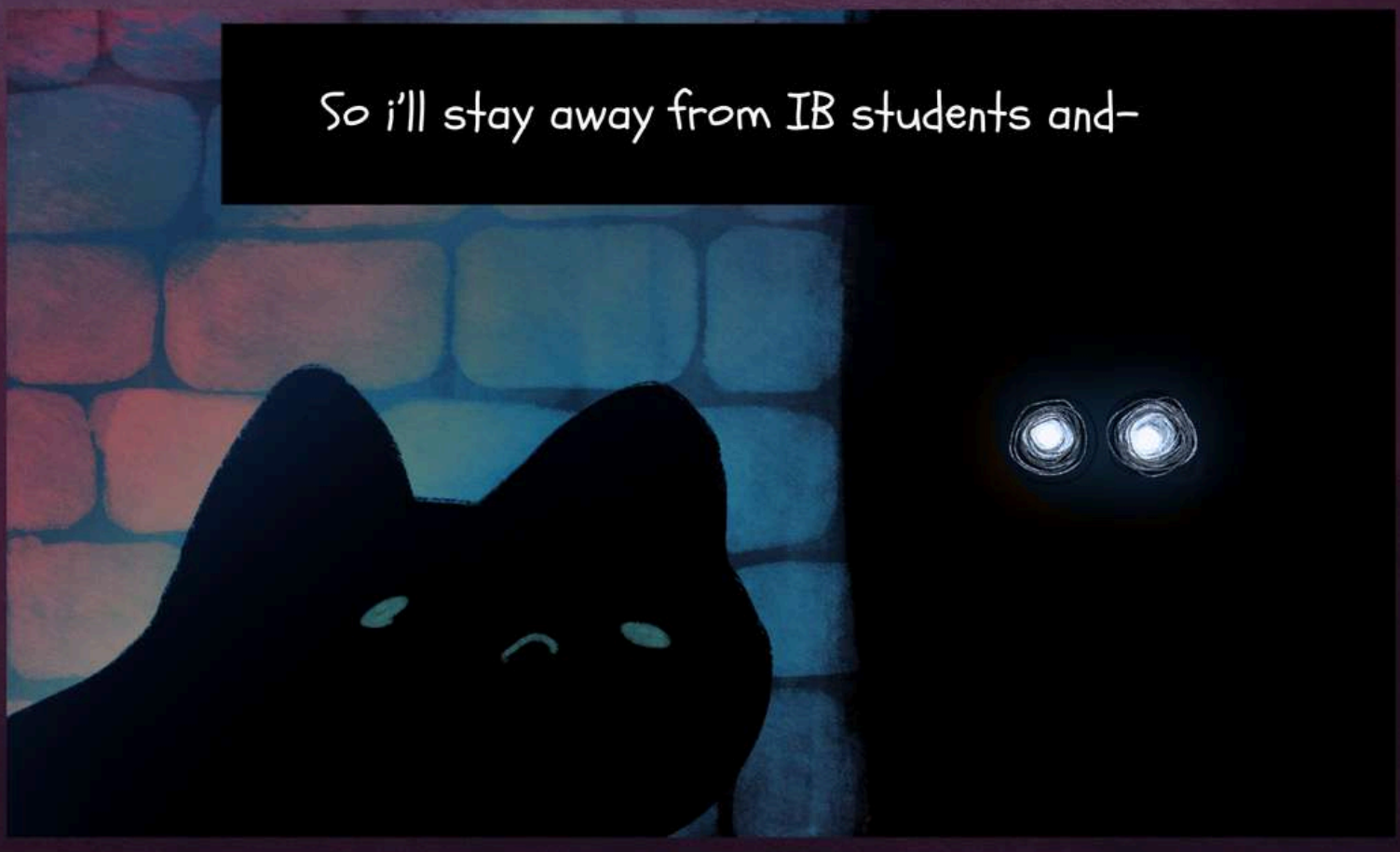
Doesn't mean i'm unwilling to take advantage of it though

Being a cat means I can be a rude bastard-
And humans love me regardless.
haha losers
Enough to be my next body.

...Next body...also known as my
Nexus
Soon I will have to choose one, or my next life will be up to the flip of a one sided coin. Straight to cell life again...

But there's so many fools to choose from


I don't want to opt into a pointlessly stressful life


So i'll stay away from IB students and-

Do you want me.
WHAT THE FLIP 😱
Where did you come from?!
Well, when a special fish fertalizes a cell-
Nononono not what I meant -

And that, was the worst day of my life.

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